

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 EPG-02 SP-02
STR-04 TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 PM-04 H-01
L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-06 /096 W
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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5223

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION NATO

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AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION USBERLIN

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

DIA WASHDC

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PARIS 19598

USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PGOV, FR

SUBJECT: FRENCH INTERNAL POLITICAL SCENE -- JUNE 1977

SUMMARY. INTENSIVE ELECTORAL MANEUVERING CONTINUED UNABATED IN JUNE, ALTHOUGH BY MONTH'S END THE SIREN SONG OF SUMMER VACATION COULD BE HEARD EVEN AMONG THE MOST INDEFATIGABLE OF POLITICIANS. AS HAS BECOME USUAL, MORE ENERGY WAS EXPENDED ON INFIGHTING WITHIN THE GROUPINGS OF LEFT AND RIGHT THAN ON COMBAT BETWEEN THE TWO. THE MAJORITY PARTIES STARTED FAST, THREATENING TO COMMIT POLITICAL SUICIDE OVER THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THEN TALKING OF AN ELECTORAL "PACT" BEFORE ONCE AGAIN DISSOLVING INTO A POLITICAL GAGGLE IN SEARCH OF LEADERSHIP. NOT TO BE OUTDONE, THE LEFT MANAGED ITS OWN OUTBURST OF FRATERNAL SQUABBLING OVER THE UPDATING OF THE COMMON PROGRAM, THIS NEW ROUND OF PS-PCF POLEMICS COMING ON THE HEELS OF THE SOCIALIST CONGRESS AT NANTES WHICH FORMALIZED ONCE AGAIN THE SPLIT BETWEEN THE MITTERRAND MAINSTREAM AND THE LEFT-WING CERES. APART FROM SUCH INTERNECINE WARFARE, THE MAJORITY CONTINUED ITS EFFORTS TO "EDUCATE" THE ELECTORATE TO THE ALLEGEDLY DEMAGOGIC, PIE-IN-THE-SKY PROMISES OF THE COMMON PROGRAM WHILE THE LEFT MAINTAINED ITS DRUMFIRE CRITIQUE OF SUPPOSEDLY INEFFECTIVE GOE ECONOMIC MEASURES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST INFLATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT. THE POLITICAL GAME CONTINUES INTO JULY WITH THE UPDATING OF THE COMMON PROGRAM AND FURTHER MANEUVERING BY THE MAJORITY TOWARD AN ELECTORAL AGREEMENT, BUT DESPITE VGE'S CLAIM THAT THE GOE WILL NOT

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GO ON VACATION THIS YEAR, SUMMER PROMISES BOTH PLAYERS AND SPECTATORS A WELCOME, ALBEIT SHORT, RESPITE. END SUMMARY.

1. THE FUTURE IS MARCH, 1978: JUNE DID LITTLE TO CHANGE THE POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE IN FRANCE -- ALL EYES REMAINED FIRMLY GLUED ON MARCH 1978 AND THE ALREADY LONG-ANTICIPATED LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS. EVERY HAPPENING ON THE LOCAL, NATIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL SCENE FOUND ITS ULTIMATE SIGNIFICANCE IN RELATION TO THE CONSTANT JOCKEYING FOR POLITICAL POSITION WHICH MARKS THE FRENCH ARENA:

-- THE SUBSTANTIVE PROCEEDINGS OF THE BREZHNEV VISIT, AS THEY CONCERNED INTERNAL POLITICS, WERE HIGHLIGHTED BY THE QUESTIONS OF WHETHER OR NOT GAULLIST LEADER AND MAYOR OF PARIS JACQUES CHIRAC WOULD BE INVITED TO DINNER AT THE ELYSEE (HE SETTLED FOR LUNCH AT THE SOVIET EMBASSY AND A BREZHNEV VISIT TO CITY HALL) AND WHETHER OR NOT THE SOVIET LEADER WOULD MEET WITH PCF CHIEF MARCHAIS (HE DIDN'T).

-- INTERNAL RPR (GAULLIST) BICKERING ON THE QUESTION OF DIRECT ELECTION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT TURNED A PROMISED DEBATE ON THE POLITICAL FUTURE OF EUROPE

INTO AN ITALIAN COMEDY OF ELECTORAL AND PARLIAMENTARY
MANEUVERING (PARIS 17786).

-- PARTIAL MUNICIPAL AND CANTONAL ELECTIONS WERE
CAST AS A DEMONSTRATION OF LEFT DISUNITY WITH IMPLICA-
TIONS FOR THE FUTURE, FIRST WITH THE PCF BLAMING THE SO-
CIALISTS FOR COMMUNIST LOSSES IN CHATELLERAULT AND NOISY-
LE-GRAND, AND THEN WITH THE PS RETURNING THE CHARGES
WHEN NATIONAL SECRETARY EDITH CRESSON LOST SEVERAL WEEKS
LATER IN ANOTHER CHATELLERAULT CONTEST. NOT ONLY DO
THESE ISSUES SYMBOLIZE THE OVERWHELMING PRIORITY PLACED
ON THE PROSPECTS FOR 1978, THEY JUST AS CLEARLY IDENTIFY
THE STAKES OF THE GAME IN THE NRAR-TERM, STAKES BASED
NOT ON LEFT VERSUS RIGHT BUT ON THE BALANCE OF POWER
WITHIN EACH COALITION.
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2. A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE: FOR THE MAJORITY PARTIES,
THE MONTH ENDED AS IT BEGAN: IN DISARRAY AND IN SEARCH
OF LEADERSHIP. ALTHOUGH ALL FACTIONS SEEM TO RECOGNIZE
THE IMPERATIVE OF CLOSER COOPERATION IF THEY ARE TO SUR-
VIVE AS A POLITICAL WHOLE, EACH SEES IN THAT SAME COOPE-
RATION THE SEEDS OF ITS OWN DESTRUCTION. PARTY SURVI-
VAL MEANS ELECTING DEPUTIES IN 1978, A GOAL THAT IMPLIES
UNITY IN THE FACE OF THE UNION OF THE LEFT. UNFORTUNA-
TELY, THAT UNITY ALSO INCLUDES THE RISK OF LOSING A
POLITICAL ARM OR LEG TO THE PREDOMINANT PARTNER OF THE
RIGHT, THE RPR. WHETHER SUCH A FATE IS BETTER OR WORSE
THAN THE POSSIBILITY OF BEING SWALLOWED WHOLE BY THE
LEFT REMAINS TO BE SEEN, AND IS CERTAINLY VIEWED DIFFER-
ENTLY BY EACH PARTY, BUT AS OF JUNE 1977, THE UNITED
LEFT BOGEYMAN IS NOT YET SCARING MAJORITY ELEMENTS INTO
GAULLIST ARMS.

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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3. IN SEARCH OF LEADERSHIP: PROSPECTS FOR MAJORITY COOPERATION ARE RETARDED FURTHER BY THE FACT THAT NO PARTY IS TOTALLY MASTER OF ITS OWN HOUSE. EVEN THAT MOST INDEPENDENT OF MAJORITY COMPONENTS, THE RPR, UST BEND OVER BACKWARDS TO APPEASE INTERNAL FACTIONS IT CAN ILL-AFFORD TO LOSE, WITNESS THE POSITION FORCED ON CHIRAC BY MICHEL DEBRE ON THE QUESTION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. BUT IF EACH PARTY CAN BE SAID TO BE SOMEWHAT UNCERTAIN OF ITS POLITICAL FOOTING, THEN THE MAJORITY AS A WHOLE IS ON SLIPPERY GROUND INDEED. THE CENTRAL ISSUE ON THE COOPERATION FRONT CONTINUED TO BE, IN JUNE AS IN MO

NTHS PAST, THE QUESTION OF LEADERSHIP: THE PR (REPUBLICAN PARTY, FORMERLY RI), AND THE CDS LOOKES AS USUAL TO GISCARD, THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF LOOKED TO PRIME MINISTER BARRE, AND THE RPR SAW ONLY CHIRAC. AFTER HIS EARLIER RUN-IN WITH GISCARD AND BARRE ON THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, CHIRAC HIMSELF CAME FORWARD LATE IN THE MONTH TO PROPOSE A A MAJORITY SUMMIT WHICH WOULD NEGOTIATE A "PACT FOR THE UPCOMING CAMPAIGN. THE INITIAL EURPH-RIA QUCIKLY DISSIPATED AS FIRST THE RADICAL SOCIALISTS (JEAN-JACQUES SERVAN-SCHREIBER) SAID NO AND THEN THE PR BALKED OVER THE CHIRACIAN ROLE OF INITIATOR/COORDINATOR. ONCE AGAIN THE QUESTION RETURNED TO BASIC PROBLEMS OF STYLE: AS THE PREPONDERANT AND MOST DYNAMIC FACTION, THE RPR AND CHIRAC SEEM DESTINED TO LEAD; BUT TO ALLOW THEM TO DO SO MEANS CAPITULATION FOR GISCARD (WHO VIEWS THE CONSERVATIVE GAULLISTS AS BEYOND THE PALE OF HIS REFORMIST IDEOLOGY AND CHIRAC HIMSELF AS PERHAPS MORE THREATENING THAN MITTERRAND) AND PERHAPS SUICIDE FOR THE CONFIDENTIAL

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OTHER PARTIES OF THE MAJORITY. IT WILL BE TOUGH DECISION FOR ALL CONCERNED -- IT CERTAINLY WASN'T MADE IN JUNE.

4. THE COMMON PROGRAM ET AL: THE PARTIES OF THE LEFT CONTINUED THEIR OWN EFFORTS AT BUILDING UNITY, BUT IN A MOST DIALECTICAL MANNER: MITTERRAND TALED OF COMMUNIST DEMAGOGUERY, MARCHAIS SAID THE LEFT DIDN'T NEED A "MAN OF PROVIDENCE (MEANING MITTERRAND) AND FABRE PROCLAIMED THAT THE LEFT RADICALS (MRG) WOULD NOT BE "WATERBOY" TO THE PS. BUT FROM SUCH AN ABUNDANCE OF THESES, FEW SYN-THESES EMERGED. IN FACT, THE MONTH ENDED WITH THE THREE PARTIES ONLY ONE-THIRD FINISHED WITH THE UPDATING OF THE COMMON PROGRAM (A PROJECT MITTERRAND HAS SAID WILL BE FINISHED BY MID-JULY) AND WITH THE TOUGHEST ISSUES, INCLUDING NATIONALIZATIONS, STILL TO BE DEBATED. SIMULTANEOUSLY THE LEFT SUFFERED THROUGH THREE MUNICIPAL AND CANTONAL ELECTION LOSSES, EACH BLAMED ON LACK OF UNITY IN SUPPORTING A SINGLE CANDIDATE IN THE SECOND ROUND. THESE EVENTS CAME ON TOP OF THE PS PARTY CONGRESS (PARIS 18804) WHICH BROGUHT INTERNAL PARTY DIFFICULTIES TO THE FOREFRONT OF PUBLIC ATTENTION AND SURFACED THE PS IDENTITY CRISIS OF A PARTY TORN BETWEEN THE POLES OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY AND MORE ORTHODOX MARXIST SOCIALISM.

5. COMPETITION REIGNS: NO ONE IS SERIOUSLY PREDICTING ELECTORAL SUICIDE OVER THE ISSUE OF UPDATING THE COMMON PROGRAM, BUT THE MATTER ALMOST SURELY WILL NOT BE SETTLED UNTIL EARLY FALL AND THEN ONLY AFTER THE NECESSARY PARADE OF ATTACKS AND COUNTERATTACKS BY THE COMPETING

"PARTNERS". COMPETITION IS THE ORDER OF THE DAY ON THE LEFT AS WELL AS THE RIGHT. COMMUNISTS AND SOCIALISTS WILL PRESENT OPPOSING CANDIDATES IN NEARLY EVERY LEGISLATIVE CIRCUMSCRIPTION (BEFORE RALLYING BEHIND THE STRONGER ON THE SECOND ROUND) AND ON THE OUTCOME OF THAT CONTEST WILL WIEGH THE RELATIVE INFLUENCE OF EACH PARTY
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IN A HYPOTHETICAL GOVERNMENT OF THE LEFT. IN THAT OPTIC, THE PS AND PCF BECOME THE MAJOR PROTAGONISTS IN THE 1978 PERSPECTIVE, EACH DRIVEN TO MAXIMIZE ITS OWN POSITION AND TO STAKE OUT AN INDEPENDENT POLITICAL BASE. THE RECENT LEFT MISHAPS IN MUNICIPAL AND CANTONAL PARTIAL ELECTIONS ARE THE REFLECTION OF THAT COMPETITION AS THE GRASS ROOTS AND SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED AS A SERIOUS PORTENT FOR THE LEGISLATIVES OF 1978.

6. SUMMERTIME BLUES: THE SUMMER DOLDRUMS APPROACH, PROMISING A PAUSE ON THE POLITICAL FRONT (..-4:#-8 #- -)-
READY DECLARED THAT NOTHING LIKE FAILURE TO COMPLETE THE COMMON PROGRAM WILL FORESTALL HIS PLANNED VACATION). IT SEEMS CERTAIN THAT ALL PARTIES CONCERNED WILL BEGIN THEIR HOLIDAYS UNDER A CLOUD OF UNCERTAINTY, THE LEFT WITH THE COMMON PROGRAM HANGING IN MID-AIR AND THE MAJORITY WITH ITS LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE UNRESOLVED. JUNE IN FACT DID VERY LITTLE TO SORT OUT THE FRENCH POLITICAL SCENE.
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Message Attributes

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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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Subject: FRENCH INTERNAL POLITICAL SCENE -- JUNE 1977 SUMMARY. INTENSIVE ELECTORAL MANEUVERING CONTINUED UNABATED IN JUNE, ALTHOUGH BY MONTH'S END THE SIRE
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vdkgvkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9e783570-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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